

Iconographical Evidence of Herihor's Northern political Expansion as a king

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Abstract

This paper studies a remarkable iconography belonging to Herihor as a king. The scene is located on the eastern inner wall of the court of the temple of Khonsu at Karnak. The iconography, with a preliminary characterization and translation of the accompanying texts, has been published previously but still offers possibilities for additional analysis. The contents offer more novel queries; among which one concerns Herihor's relationship with Hathor of Dendera, based on the iconographic detail representing the king receiving his regal epithets incised inside cartouches. The study examines the relationship between the king and the goddess, and includes a discussion of the titles included only in the Hb-sd symbol surmounted by the crown of Upper Egypt. Throughout the interpretation of the symbolism expressed by the scene, the Study, arrives at the conclusions of an approximated geographical boundary; that Herihor, as a king, exerted control at least as far north as the region of Iwnt  (Dendera).

Introduction

The rise of Herihor as a King was expected. Towards the end of the Twentieth Dynasty, specifically during the reign of Ramses XI, royal authority was faded and forced to submit to the increasing influence of the ambitious high priests of Amon at Thebes. This was inevitable consequence resulting from an abnormal royal approach to the high priests of Amon since the beginning of the New kingdom, in which there were exaggerated demands for clerical and economic support to consolidate the king's dominance and to emphasize their legitimacy.¹ The new policy was manifested in the distribution of fertile land areas, slaves and booty to the temples of Amon at Thebes;² the enormous quantity of various treasures donated to the priesthood listed in papyrus Harries, provide a foundation upon which it can be estimated just how rich the priests of Amon became.³ for instance, The Temples of Amon, at that time, possessed two thirds of all fertile land areas in Egypt, Ninety per cent of all ships, and much else.⁴ As a consequence, the priesthood was enriched and empowered, and led to find a rich and powerful sacerdotal category.

Also during the reigns of the powerful Ramesside kings, high priests of Amon at Thebes enjoyed a leading and sizable status. An eminent example occurred during the first year of the reign of Ramses II: it is clearly manifested in selecting and appointing, *Imn-nb-wnn.f* as the high priest of

Amon at Thebes. Before holding this new prestigious job, *Imn-nb-wnn.f* had been: “High Priest of Hathor of Dendera”, “High Priest of Anuris of Thinis” and “Chief of the Priests of all the Gods of the South from Thebes in the South to Thinis in the North”. The king himself descended the river leaving Thebes after celebrating the Opet Festival,⁵ landing at Abydos and reached the location where *Imn-nb-wnn.f* was, to promise him the post, and also to inform him that this selection was based on the sacred choice of the oracle of Amon. Such an unusual act and procedure was intended to create and emphasize a complete clerical loyalty of the new incumbent who occupied an outstanding religious and economic job.⁶

Herihor was the most powerful of all the high Priests of Amon at Thebes. His early career is obscure, it believed that, he could have a military background which enabled him to occupy potentially influential military posts,⁷ in which his power emerged and intervened in the state affairs. As a consequence of his success he was appointed governor of the south and the king's son in Kush; ultimately during the end of the reign of Ramses XI (or directly after it), Herihor attained kingly cartouches and titles, and as much, he completed the construction of the outer court of Khonsu Temple in Karnak. Its reliefs and inscriptions represent our primary source for a highly important phase of the rise of Herihor, from his time as a high priest of Amon at Thebes, until the moment of his proclamation as a king.

However, despite his royal proclamation and the public application of royal insignias and epithets such as: *Nsw bity*, *Nb t3wy*, *ꜥ3 Ra*,⁸ together with an iconographic program in which he is shown as the ruler of both the Upper and Lower Egypt, Herihor apparently never managed to reach the status of the king of the whole of Egypt.⁹

Continuing from this, this paper will proceed to analyze a unique iconographical scene carved in high relief and located in the middle register on the eastern inner wall of the court of the temple of Khonsu at Karnak. The scene contains important information and data concerning Herihor's remarkable and unprecedented status. While the iconography and texts at large describes Herihor as a king, the most intriguing scene depicts him between Isis and Hathor, while receiving two jubilee symbols; one of symbols bears both his praenomen and nomen.

Description

1. The Scene:

The scene (figure 1) illustrates Herihor in the center, as the protagonist of the event. He wears long transparent and common Ramesside clothing, and holds with his right hand two scepters: *HqA* and *nxx*. A vulture is hovering above his head, its claws carrying the complex and traditional formula *nb anx wAs* hanging from a *Snw* sign, and by spreading its wings upon him, it provides protection for both Herihor's body and praenomen *sA-*

Imn Hry-@r. The wish of life and dominion formula *di-anx-wAs* is listed twice: below the left extended wing of the vulture and above the *Hb-sd* symbols offered by Hathor to the king, and again behind the torso of Herihor just below his right elbow.

Herihor is oriented facing Hathor to the right and attended by Isis to the left, *@wt-Hr iwnt*, or Hathor of Dendera, is depicted somewhat larger than Isis. Hathor gives the king two sticks, tied and surmounted by the two Uraei of Horus, one wears the crown of Upper Egypt, the other the crown of Lower Egypt, *sed* festival symbols hang from each one of the Uraei; an empty *Hb-sd* symbol hangs from the figure wearing the red crown, while the white crowned figure holds a *Hb-sd* symbol bearing the two cartouches of Herihor. The later symbol is received by the king in his left hand, in which he holds a pending *anx*, a wish of long life to the owner of the epithets.

2. Accompanying texts:

Before both Hathor and the King:

Ssp.n.k iartwy @r xa.sn Hr tp.k

“You received the two uraei of Horus; they may shine upon your head”

Above Hathor:

@t-Hr nbt iwnt irt Ra HqAt ...

“Hathor, Lady of Dendera, The eye of Re, the ruler of ...”

Behind Hathor:

wn nsw bity nb tAwy sA Imn Hry-@r, xa wD m nsw bit(y) tA Sma mHw Dt

“The king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the two lands, Siamn-Herihor, shall maintain the glorious appearance as king of the south and the north forever”

Behind Herihor standing Isis, she is patting him on the shoulder with the right hand, with the other hand carrying a sacred scepter.

Before and behind Isis:

sAw HA.k m nTrw nbw awy.sn di n.k Hbw mi ra

“Protection is around you from all gods, as their hands give you the jubilees like Re”

Above Isis:

Ist wrt mwt nTr Hnwt nTrw nbw di.s anx wAs

“Isis, the great, mother of the god, lady of all the gods, as she gives life and dominion”

Results

The actual scene contains remarkable details, which documents the existence of radical, political and clerical evolution, occurred during the second half of the reign of Ramses XI, culminating in Herihor’s kingship.

Herihor is represented before one of the most important goddess in ancient Egypt, Hathor, a deity associated with strengthening the king’s

dominance and legitimacy of the throne of Egypt, she was considered protectress of Horus; consequently, protectress of each Egyptian king as representative of Horus on the throne of Egypt. Such an association was manifested in Hathor's appearance in a female face, this type of illustration is attested since the predynastic period.¹⁰ The same symbolism is expressed in sculptures of Hathor with the king; as early as the Old Kingdom.¹¹

Returning to the main scene, Hathor is represented larger than Isis, which could indicate to the wish of Herihor to be supported by @wt-Hr iwnt, main goddess of Dendera. Furthermore; by receiving the Hb-sd symbols from this goddess, one of them contains his royal names. Herihor emphasizes the special position of Hathor of Dendera, or possibly the region of Dendera itself.¹² Meanwhile, a local cult of Hathor existed at Thebes too; Shrines and Speos were found during the New Kingdom and dedicated to her.¹³ This suggests a sphere of influence beyond the local cult center.

Aside from its religious importance as a main center of the cult of Hathor, Dendera was actually one of the most important strategic check-points in Upper Egypt. The city, which was the capital of the sixth nome of Upper Egypt, is located at the crossroads of the Eastern desert and the Red sea,¹⁴ leading to the gold mines and stone quarries of the eastern desert.¹⁵ Since the Old kingdom, titles held by several nobles of Dendera indicate strong links with the army, referring to Dendera as a defense point, noted in title HqA-Hwt,¹⁶ "chief of the walled village".¹⁷ Which support the view that this town enjoyed a unique importance for Herihor.

Administrative duality acknowledged in this scene represents the main feature of the Egyptian state, continuing an essential characterization of the concept of the geographical, symbolic and religious duality from the earliest dynasties. The Egyptians believed that unity was emphasized by the complementarity of its two main parts, demonstrated in the royal titles nb tAwy Lord of the Two Lands, nbty who belongs to the two ladies of south and north, nsw bity who belongs to the Sedge and the Bee, and the duality developed in the two crowns (white and red).¹⁸ Since the Middle kingdom onward, each part of Egypt; south and north, was governed by a separate vizier responsible to the king in civil affairs, the significance of such division was initially minimal under the strong kings of the middle and the beginning of the New kingdom, but it notably increased with the faded royal power at the end of the Ramesside times.¹⁹

Conclusion

The evident religious support of Hathor and Isis to Herihor as a king, the main purpose of the present scene, could determine the real northern boundary of his authority and influence, the scene could be interpreted as a

kind of religious and geographical plan of Herihor's northern expansion as a ruler of Upper Egypt, which is represented in the following points:

- Herihor intended to receive from Hathor of Dendera both his royal names in the Hb-sd symbol surmounted by the white crown (symbolizing Upper Egypt), in contrast with the second Hb-sd symbol, which is surmounted by the red (thus, Lower Egypt) and intentionally left empty and respectably ignored, such an act confirms Herihor's acceptance of partial dominion as a ruler, acknowledging that he was the ruler of solely Upper Egypt, while the northern territory remained without reach, the iconographical detail of the uninscribed Hb-sd symbol reveals that Herihor recognized his territorial limitation.

- Showing Herihor while he received his names inside the cartouches from @wt-Hr Iwnt, who geographically represented the region of Dendera, suggests the real northern borderline of his influence and authority as a ruler. There are no representations, texts or emphasized local deities having the same act with Herihor, that indicate a political or territorial claim of the King further north than Dendera.

- Herihor's selection and accentuation of Hathor in this scenario supports the widely spread theory which suggests that Herihor originated outside of Thebes, possibly in middle Egypt and that he arrived in Thebes on his appointment to assume the high-priesthood,²⁰ the present scene, in my opinion, prompts the possibility of his origin from Dendera region.

- in the same hall, no other scene includes the Hb-sd symbol bearing the royal epithets of Herihor, which supports and confirms the uniqueness and high value of the present scene; moreover, it gives emphasis to Herihor as a ruler of Upper Egypt, with its northern boundary in the Dendera region-if not further.

- Throughout the present scene, Herihor confesses the existence of a sort of political harmony, a dual authority and shared responsibilities between him and Semendes in the north (Delta). Primarily, this is highlighted in the empty Hb-sd symbol, with the Uraei crowned with the red crown, which indicates the authority over Lower Egypt.

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Figures

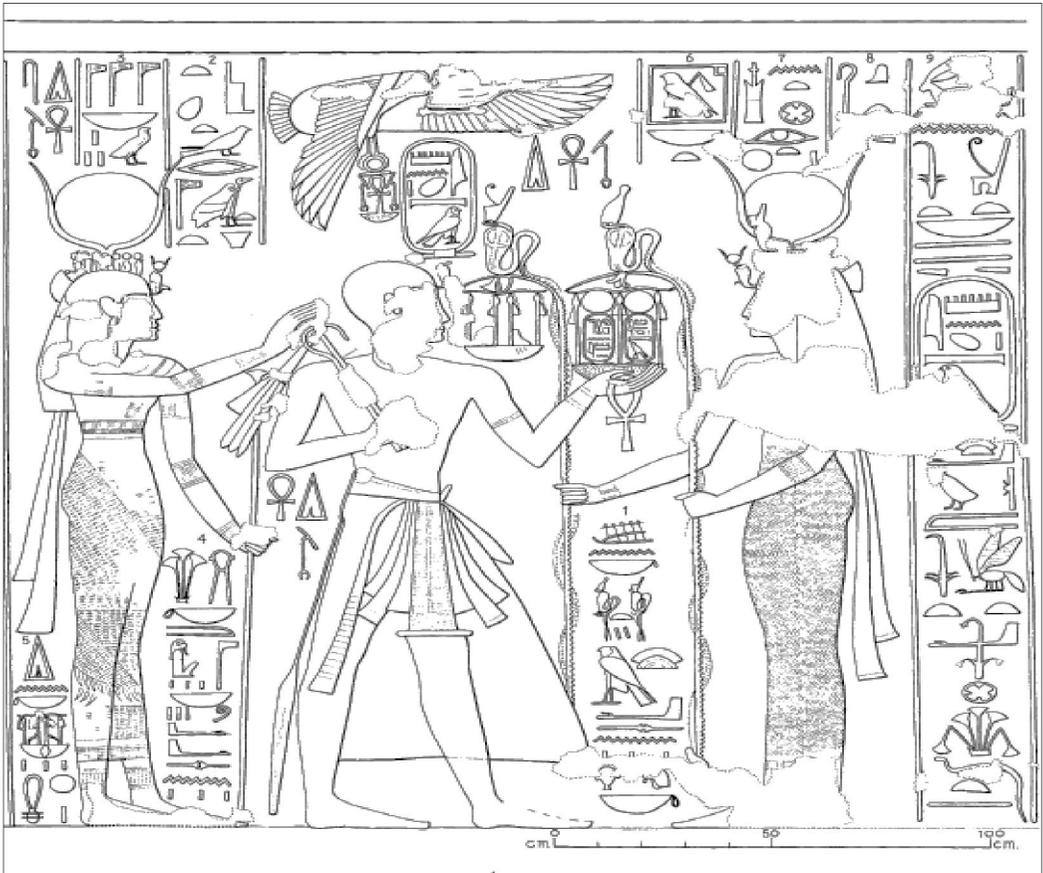


Figure 1

Herihor receives his epithets incised inside a Hb-sd symbol
Surmounted by the white crown from Hathor of Dendera
The Epigraphic Survey, The Temple of Khonsu, Vol. I, Scenes of king
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ملخص البحث

يدرس البحث منظر هام يخص حريحور كملك. يقع المنظر على الجدار الداخلي الشرقي لفناء معبد خونسو في الكرنك. وقد تم نشر المنظر سابقاً، مع وصف أولي وترجمة للنصوص المصاحبة له، ولكنه لا يزال يطرح تساؤلات عنه، تدفع إلى إجراء دراسات إضافية. كما تطرح محتويات المنظر المزيد من الاستفسارات، يتعلق أحدها بعلاقة حريحور مع حتحور دندرة، بناءً على تصويره وهو يستلم القابه الملكية المنقوشة داخل خراطيش. حيث يدرس البحث العلاقة بين الملك والإلهة حتحور، كما يتضمن مناقشة للألقاب المدرجة في رمز الحب سد الذي يعلوه تاج مصر العليا، ومن خلال تفسير الرمزية التي عبر عنها المنظر، توصلت الدراسة إلى تحديد تقريبي للحدود الجغرافية؛ وهي أن نفوذ حريحور كملك، امتد شمالاً حتى منطقة ايونيت (دندرة) على الأقل.

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